



Zoom In On a Tree

How to appreciate the small things in life



Purpose

The learner will gain an appreciation of nature from a distance and close up point of view. As they hone their **observation** skills, their curiosity will increase. The learner will explore a tree from a distance and then “zoom in” on a specific place or aspect of the tree, sketching the tree from two different **perspectives**. Each investigation will bring new awareness of what makes up a tree. The learner will learn that trees can be good **habitats** for insects, animals, **lichen**, **fungi** and even plants.

Time

40 minutes

Materials

- ☐ Age-appropriate book that looks at trees or nature up close up.
- ☐ “Zoom In” handout or notepad
- ☐ Clipboards
- ☐ Colored pencils

Safety Tips

- ☐ Appropriate footwear is essential when walking in natural areas
- ☐ Discuss the importance of utilizing one's sense of sight. Use touch only if it is safe to do so (i.e. no poisonous plants, stinging insects, etc.) and never taste an unknown object. Listening to the tree can add another dimension to this investigation.

Overview

The related literature in addition to the process of looking at a tree from a distance and close up will help the learner see that a tree is something that can be explored. Trees are made up of different types of leaves, bark colors, branch structures, and **organisms** that make a tree their home. By drawing the tree from a distance and then a “zoom in” portion, the learner will take notice of the bigger picture as well as the small things that make up a tree.

What to Do

1. Begin with a discussion about what they think a tree is, what it looks like and what they know about trees.
2. Read literature of choice, preferably near a tree.
3. Provide “Zoom In” handout (below) or paper to draw on along with colored pencils.
4. Describe the activity.
 - a. Ask them to find a tree they like in a safe location.
 - b. They will stand away from the tree and draw what it looks like from a distance. This will probably include the shape of the tree, branching patterns, possibly leaf shape but just let the learner just draw what they notice about the tree.
 - c. Ask them to move close to the tree and pick a spot to “zoom in”. This could be the tree trunk, a branch, a leaf or interesting element found on the tree. This spot could be anywhere from one square inch to 6 square inches.
 - d. Have the learner draw what they see on their “zoom in” portion of the tree.
5. When finished, have each learner share their pictures and share what they observed.

Questions for Review

- ☐ What did you notice about your tree?
- ☐ What was different about looking at a tree from a distance and then “zoomed in”?
- ☐ What colors did you see?
- ☐ What shapes or patterns did you see?
- ☐ Did you see any insects, plants, animals, **lichen** or **fungi** on your tree?
- ☐ What do you think makes your tree unique or special?

Key Words

Fungi: A living thing that is neither plant nor animal such as mushrooms, molds and yeasts

Habitats: The natural home of an animal, plant, or other organism

Lichen: A crusty, leaflike, or branching growth on rocks, trees or the ground

Organism: Any living thing such as an insect, plant, animal, fungus or lichen

Observation: Looking at something carefully

Perspective: The way you see something

Extension Activity

The learner can do this activity any number of ways. They can look at plants, flowers, bodies of water, the ground, etc. from a distance and then “zoom in” to observe the area up close. It might be possible to explore the tree across different seasons to see what type of observable changes occur.

Zoom In On A Tree: What Do You See?

Activity Materials:

- Colored Pencils or Markers
- Magnifying Glass

Observe a Tree:

1. Draw your tree from top to bottom.
2. Use your magnifying glass to zoom in on a small portion of your tree.
3. Draw your zoomed-in view.

Tree Sketch:

Zoom In:

4. Describe the unique features of your tree. Be sure to use your senses to tell how it looks, feels and smells. _____
